

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S 75 YEARS OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND THE DEDICATION OF THE CIMMARUSTI SCIENCE CENTER

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 29, 2003

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Glendale Community College on its 75th anniversary, and to celebrate the dedication of the Cimmarusti Science Center.

Glendale College was founded in 1927 as a junior college at the old Glendale Union High School site. It served the needs of the people in La Crescenta, Glendale, and Tujunga. An earthquake devastated several of the main buildings, and finally in 1937 the college opened its new facilities. The community continued to grow and the campus thrived. In 1981, the college separated from the Glendale Unified School District.

Today, Glendale Community College helps more than 25,000 students meet their educational goals. It has a college-credit enrollment of about 15,000 day and evening students and about 10,000 students are enrolled in the adult education programs. Its exceptional reputation and tradition for academic excellence and quality lives on in the current administration and student body. Its progressive and extensive curriculum includes customized contract instruction for companies, career training, and certificates in vocational training. The college innovatively forges and promotes mutually beneficial partnerships with industries and the city.

In 1998, \$2 million in Federal funding was requested for a NASA/JPL science education center to be located on the campus. Appropriation legislation was signed in late October of the same year. On March 4, 1999, brothers and local businessmen Larry and Ralph Cimmarusti presented an additional gift of \$1 million to the college, as they are proud alumni. Their name will eternally be associated with the school by the state-of-the-art science center that will bear their name. The center will also serve as a regional training facility for local schools, enriching the already impressive list of services available at the college. The Cimmarusti Science Center's math and science education will not only be an example for other colleges, it will raise public interest in the subjects. The center also includes a spectacular planetarium, one of just a few at community colleges across the country.

Glendale Community College is unique in its approach to education and in the way it utilizes its resources. It is a truly pioneering institution that has earned the endless praise of those who have seen it develop, and those who have benefited from its infinite opportunities. It is a model of dependable leadership and unstoppable advancement. Glendale Community College is at the forefront of edu-

cation in our community, and its innumerable successes have already spanned three quarters of a century. It will undoubtedly continue to serve our community by responding to changing needs and meeting all challenges.

I ask all Members of Congress to join me today in congratulating Glendale Community College on 75 truly exemplary years of service to the community, the opening of the Cimmarusti Science Center, and for the college's commitment to educational excellence.

INTRODUCING THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ACT

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 29, 2003

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, today Congresswoman NORTON and I have introduced the "Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act." A detailed summary of the bill's provisions is attached.

The bill organizes four regional commissions under a common framework, thereby providing a more uniform method for distributing economic development funds throughout the regions most in need of such assistance. It reauthorizes the Delta Regional Authority and the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority and creates two new regional commissions: The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission and the Southwest Border Regional Commission. Both of these latter commissions have been proposed in legislation introduced in this Congress and are designed to address problems of systemic poverty and chronic underdevelopment in those regions. Every county or parish that is currently included in a commission through enacted or proposed legislation is similarly included in that same commission under this bill. While the bill follows the successful organizational model of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), it does not include the ARC or the Denali Commission (a wholly intrastate commission) in its framework.

Regional commissions provide vital assistance to the development of the Nation's most chronically poor and distressed regions. They are true Federal-State partnerships, bringing together Federal, State, and local governments to expand the economic and development opportunities of a chronically distressed region. These regions typically experience rates of poverty and unemployment that are more than 150 percent of the national average. Further, some of these areas lack the transportation and basic public infrastructure necessary to support business development, and importantly, create jobs in the region.

The regional commissions are designed to assist areas in overcoming chronic economic distress by focusing on the distressed region as a whole. By recognizing that systemic economic distress follows geographic and natural

resource realities, rather than arbitrary State or political subdivision borders, the commissions are able to concentrate their efforts over the entire region—regardless of State lines. One way that federally designated regional commissions work within the region to overcome the effects of chronic underdevelopment is through investment in infrastructure, including transportation, telecommunications and other basic public infrastructure. The commissions also assist the region in obtaining job skills training, entrepreneurship, technology, and business development. Through these efforts, commissions work to improve the economic development of these systemically distressed regions.

Regional commissions also supplement the state share of other Federal programs to ensure that areas that do not even have the economic means of meeting a required State or local funding share are not denied the opportunity to participate in these programs. Regional commissions assist in local development planning by helping provide local development districts with the resources and expertise necessary to formulate and follow a comprehensive, strategic regional development plan. Often it is the local development planning that is the key for the successful implementation of economic and infrastructure development programs.

The Regional and Economic Infrastructure Development Act is modeled after the statute authorizing the ARC. The ARC has demonstrated that regional commissions are successful in fighting chronic underdevelopment and poverty. Since the ARC's creation in 1965, employment in the 13-State region has grown by nearly 66 percent. In contrast, in the decade preceding its creation, employment in the region had declined by 1.5 percent. Further, the poverty rate of the region has been cut by more than one half—from 31.1 percent in 1960 to 13.6 percent in 2000.

As the Nation continues to suffer through a weakened economy, the need for these commissions becomes even more important. Figures released this August show that the national unemployment rate has increased to 6.1 percent, the highest level since July 1994. Further, since January 2001, the number of people unemployed increased from 5.95 million to 8.91 million—an increase of almost 3 million, or 50 percent.

Moreover, workers who have lost their jobs are having more trouble finding new jobs. The average length of unemployment is now almost 20 weeks, the longest it has been in nearly two decades. Within the last 2 years, the number of workers who have been unemployed for longer than 6 months has increased by more than 1.3 million to nearly 2 million—an increase of almost 200 percent. One-half of the unemployed are out of work for more than 9 weeks and more than one in five have been out of work for more than 6 months.

As the economy continues to founder, it is these historically depressed regions—the regions that have already been struggling—that suffer a disproportionate share of the burden.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Now, perhaps more than ever, there is a greater need for these regional commissions. This bill recognizes the importance of the regional commissions to these chronically distressed areas. The bill strengthens the commissions by establishing a uniform organizational structure, under which an affirmative vote of a commission requires a majority of State members plus the affirmative vote of the Federal cochairperson. With this voting structure, the bill ensures that the Federal and State roles in a commission are equal and interdependent, thereby promoting a true Federal-State partnership.

In addition, the bill establishes a coordinating council for the regional commissions consisting of representatives from all the commissions, including the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Denali Commission. The coordinating council is directed to meet biannually to discuss issues facing regions that suffer chronic distress and successful strategies for promoting regional development. While the council will assist the commissions in promoting regional development, it has no decision-making authority over any of the commissions.

Finally, the bill authorizes sufficient funds for each commission so that a commission will have the means available to fulfill its mission of promoting economic and infrastructure development. The bill authorizes \$30 million for each commission in fiscal year 2004 (the amount currently authorized for the Delta and Northern Great Plains Regional Authorities) and increases that authorization by \$5 million for each successive year through fiscal year 2008.

Frankly, I am concerned about this administration's lack of funding for existing regional commissions. In its fiscal year 2004 budget proposal, the administration slashes the budgets of the regional commissions—proposing only \$2 million for the Delta Regional Authority and no funding for the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority. If these budget proposals were to be enacted, the commissions, and their grant-making authority, would be rendered essentially ineffective. Providing the commissions with the funds necessary to carry out their purpose is crucial to the economic development of these regions.

It is time that we affirm our commitment to regional economic development by authorizing these commissions and providing the funding necessary from them to break the cycle of chronic distress in these regions. I believe this bill will help us do that.

SUMMARY OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ACT

The Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act organizes four regional commissions under a common framework, thereby providing a more uniform method for distributing economic assistance throughout the regions most in need of such assistance. It reauthorizes the Delta Regional Authority and the Northern Great Plains Regional Commission and creates two new regional commissions: the Southeast Crescent and the Southwest Border Regional Commission. Both of these latter commissions have been proposed in legislation introduced this Congress and are designed to address problems of systemic poverty and chronic underdevelopment in those regions. Every county or parish that is currently included in a commission through enacted or proposed legislation is similarly included in that same commission under this bill. While

the bill follows the successful organizational model of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), it does not include the ARC or the Denali Commission (a wholly intrastate commission) in its framework.

PURPOSE

To organize the regional commissions in the lower 48 states (with the exception of the Appalachian Regional Commission) under a common framework, providing a more uniform organization structure among the commissions and a more uniform method for distributing economic assistance throughout the country.

COMMISSIONS

The bill reauthorizes the Delta Regional Commission and the Northern Great Plains Regional Commission, and creates the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission and the Southwest Border Regional Commission. The Delta Regional Commission and the Northern Great Plains Regional Commission are composed of the same states, counties, and parishes included in the existing Delta Regional Authority and Northern Great Plains Regional Authority. The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission and the Southwest Border Regional Commission are composed of the same states and counties proposed in legislation introduced in the 108th Congress to create a Southeast Crescent Regional Authority and a Southwest Border Regional Commission.

Each commission is authorized to receive appropriations of \$30 million for fiscal year 2004; \$35 million for fiscal year 2005; \$40 million for fiscal year 2006; \$45 million for fiscal year 2007; and \$50 million for fiscal year 2008.

Currently, some counties qualify for membership in more than one regional commission. The bill does not change that. However, the bill provides that an individual county may only receive economic assistance from one regional commission. Therefore, if a county is eligible for membership in more than one commission, it must select one commission in which it would like to participate and be eligible to receive funds. A county or parish can change its selection 90 days before the start of the fiscal year.

The Denali Commission and the Appalachian Regional Commission are not included in this statute.

COMPOSITION

Each commission includes a Federal cochairperson and a state cochairperson, who is selected from among the state members. Like current law, the Northern Great Plains Commission also includes a tribal cochairperson.

An affirmative vote of a commission requires an affirmative vote of the federal cochairperson plus a majority of state members.

Like the current laws authorizing regional commissions, the bill sets forth provisions for the salaries of commission members, the appointment of alternatives, and the hiring of additional staff, including an Executive Director.

The bill establishes a coordinating council for the regional commissions consisting of representatives from all the commissions, including the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Denali Commission. The coordinating council is directed to meet biannually to discuss issues facing regions that suffer chronic distress and successful strategies for promoting regional development. The council has no decision-making authority.

Also like current law, each state must develop a comprehensive economic development plan and each commission must develop an economic and infrastructure development plan.

Commissions are required to designate distressed, transitional and attainment coun-

ties, and isolated areas of distress within attainment counties, within their region and must allocate at least 50 percent of the appropriations made available to the commission to projects in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Commissions have the authority to make grants to State and local governments, and public and nonprofit organizations, for economic development projects, with an emphasis on infrastructure projects, including transportation, basic public, and telecommunications infrastructure projects.

The bill provides for a commission share of 50 percent of the costs of projects; that percentage increases to up to 80 percent for distressed counties. These shares are increased by 10 percent (to 60 percent and 90 percent, respectively) for those projects that have a significant regional impact.

Commissions have the authority to make grants to local development districts to assist in the payment of the administration of the district. The commission of these grants is limited to 80 percent of the administrative expenses of the local development district receiving the grant.

Commissions have the authority to supplement part of the basic Federal contribution to projects authorized under other Federal grant programs and to increase the Federal contribution above the fixed maximum part of the cost. The federal share is the same for projects (50 percent and 80 percent for distressed counties, with a 10 percent bonus for regional projects), with the stipulation that the total federal contribution cannot exceed 80 percent.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. JOHN A. DAVITT, PRESIDENT AND SUPERINTENDENT OF GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 29, 2003

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate John Davitt who has dedicated 35 years of service to Glendale Community College.

John A. Davitt received a B.S. in History in 1954 and an M.A. in Secondary Education in 1958 from the University of San Francisco. In 1977, he graduated from the University of Southern California with a doctorate in Community College Administration-Higher Education. While he pursued his own studies, Dr. Davitt continued to exercise his passion to teach and serve the student community in the San Francisco Unified School District. From 1968 to 1980, he was a consultant for the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, and from 1970 to 1985, he was a consultant for the College Entrance Examination Board.

Dr. Davitt has had a myriad of impressive employment and service experiences. From 1955 to 1957, he was stationed at Fort Mason, California as a First Lieutenant in the United States Army. From 1957 to 1964, he was a Social Studies teacher, counselor, and debating coach at Roosevelt Junior High School, and instructor at Galileo Adult School in San Francisco. Additionally, from 1964 to 1966 Dr. Davitt was a counselor at Merritt College. He was the director and assistant professor of the Institute for Training of Community College Student Personnel Workers at